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United Nations Decade of International Law

Draft resolution proposed by the Chairman of the Working Group on the United Nations Decade of International Law

United Nations Decade of International Law

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 44/23 of 17 November 1989, by which it declared the period 1990–1999 the United Nations Decade of International Law,

Noting the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of International Law in 1999,

Also recalling that the main purposes of the Decade, according to its resolution 44/23, should be, *inter alia*:

(a) To promote acceptance of and respect for the principles of international law,

(b) To promote means and methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, including resort to and full respect for the International Court of Justice,

(c) To encourage the progressive development of international law and its codification,

(d) To encourage the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law,

Further recalling its resolution 51/157 of 16 December 1996, to which was annexed the programme for the activities for the final term (1997–1999) of the Decade, its resolution 51/158 of 16 December 1996, entitled "Electronic treaty database", and its resolution 52/153 of 15 December 1997,

Expressing its appreciation for the note submitted by the Secretary-General,[1] and having considered it,

[1] A/53/492.

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Welcoming the significant steps taken by the Secretary-General to rationalize and expedite the registration and publication of treaties pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Noting the completion of the initial phase of the new electronic database for the United Nations Treaty Collection,

Recalling that the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties between States and International Organizations or between International Organizations of 21 March 1986[2] is one of the conventions adopted under the aegis of the United Nations which have codified the law of treaties, and recalling also the impact of the Convention on the practice of treaties concluded between States and international organizations or between international organizations,

Noting that in accordance with General Assembly decision 41/420 of 3 December 1986, the Secretary-General signed, on behalf of the United Nations, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties between States and International Organizations or between International Organizations,

Also recalling that at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly the Sixth Committee established the Working Group on the United Nations Decade of International Law with a view to preparing generally acceptable recommendations on the programme of activities for the Decade,

Noting that at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly the Sixth Committee reconvened the Working Group to continue its work in accordance with Assembly resolutions 52/153 and 52/155 of 15 December 1997 and all previous resolutions on the question,

Having considered the oral report of the Chairman of the Working Group to the Sixth Committee,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* for the work done on the United Nations Decade of International Law at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, and requests the Working Group of the Sixth Committee to continue its work at the fifty-fourth session in accordance with its mandate and methods of work;

2. *Also expresses its appreciation* to States and international organizations and institutions that have undertaken activities, including sponsoring conferences on various subjects of international law, in implementation of the programme for the activities for the final term (1997–1999) of the Decade;

3. *Invites* all States and international organizations and institutions referred to in the programme to provide, update or supplement information on activities they have undertaken in implementation of the programme, as appropriate, to the Secretary-General for inclusion in the report requested in paragraph 8 of Assembly resolution 51/157, which should also contain a list of major international conventions adopted under the auspices of the United Nations during the Decade in the field of international law;

4. *Welcomes* the work done by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the field of peaceful settlement of disputes, including the adoption of its optional rules of procedure for fact-finding commissions of inquiry, which entered into effect on 15 December 1997;

5. *Encourages* States to disseminate at the national level, as appropriate, information contained in the note submitted by the Secretary-General;[1]

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[2] A/CONF.129/15.

6. *Authorizes* the Secretary-General to deposit, on behalf of the United Nations, an act of formal confirmation of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties between States and International Organizations or between International Organizations as provided in article 83 of the Convention;

7. *Also encourages* States to consider ratifying or acceding to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties between States and International Organizations or between International Organizations,[2] international organizations that have signed the Convention to deposit an act of formal confirmation of the Convention and other international organizations entitled to do so to accede to it at an early date;

8. *Encourages* States parties and international organizations or agencies, including depositaries, in order to facilitate further implementation of the obligation laid down in Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations to provide, where available, a copy of the text of any treaty in disk or other electronic format and to consider providing, where available, translations in English or French or both, as may be needed, for the purpose of assisting with the timely publication of the United Nations *Treaty Series*;

9. *Expresses* its appreciation to the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat for its efforts to facilitate access to information concerning United Nations activities in the field of international law, and to bring up to date the publication of the *United Nations Juridical Yearbook*, and encourages it to continue its efforts in this regard;

10. *Expresses* its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the progress achieved in establishing a new electronic database for the United Nations Treaty Collection, and encourages him to continue the development of this database with a view to expeditiously providing Member States with a greater range of easily accessible treaty-related information;

11. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue developing a policy of providing Internet access to the United Nations *Treaty Series* and the *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General*, bearing in mind the needs of States, in particular developing countries in recovering the costs thereof, and requests the Secretary-General to report on this issue at its fifty-fourth session;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide all necessary assistance, including translations services, to implement the plan to eliminate the historical backlog in the publication of the United Nations *Treaty Series* within the next biennium;

13. *Expresses* its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his note containing a list of the titles of the treaties appearing in the publication *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General*;[3]

14. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that hard copies of the publications mentioned in paragraphs 11 and 12 above continue to be distributed to permanent missions free of charge in accordance with their needs;

15. *Appeals* to States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations working in the field of international law and to the private sector to make financial contributions or contributions in kind for the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the programme;

16. *Once again requests* the Secretary-General to bring the programme, as well as the note referred to in paragraph 12 above, to the attention of States and international organizations and institutions working in the field of international law;

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[3] A/53/525.

17. *Notes with appreciation* the activities undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the field of international humanitarian law, including with regard to the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict;

18. *Takes note* with interest of the events that will take place during the year 1999 to commemorate the centennial of the first International Peace Conference and the closing of the United Nations Decade of International Law;

19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "United Nations Decade of International Law" and to convene a one-day plenary meeting on 17 November 1999 to mark the end of the Decade.